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ABSTRACT

This study examined the recent research dealing with humor, praise, and criticism in the classroom and evaluated the results with respect to the early adolescent. It is posited that the use of humor, praise, and criticism can both positively and negatively affect the academic achievement and social growth of students at the middle level of education. The study is organized in the form of an annotated bibliography. The four major sections are: humor, praise, criticism, and literature on early adolescence. The literature in each of the first three sections is arranged and annotated under the headings of positive effects and negative effects. The early adolescent literature is arranged and annotated under the headings of general characteristics, behavior, self-concept/self-esteem, and middle school programs. A summary of the research is provided and some considerations for the middle school teacher are presented in the conclusions. A bibliography of the research reviewed concludes the report. Appended are a chart on stages of development and types of humor, a list of learner traits, and a brief article on the developmental needs of young adolescents and how schools can respond. (JD)

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Humor, Praise, and Criticism:
Considerations for the Middle School Classroom Teacher

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the field of education is marked by fadism. Ideas and practices are introduced by strong advocates who make impressive claims for their effectiveness, and the ideas or practices are accepted enthusiastically on the basis of these claims, despite the lack of supporting research.

(Brophy and Evertson, 1976, p. vii)

Teacher behavior research has provided the educational system with many characteristics, theories, and applications concerning effectiveness in the classroom (Ornstein and Levine, 1981, p. 592). Humor, praise, and criticism have been identified as variables of teacher effectiveness (Terry and Woods, 1975; Brophy and Good, 1974), and studies investigating the use of these variables have produced contradictory results in recent years (Ornstein and Levine, 1981, p. 595). Because of the complex nature of teacher effectiveness research, the available studies must be investigated, weighed carefully with respect to sample, method, and results, and digested with the appropriate significance in mind (Good, Biddle, Brophy, 1975, p. vi).

Research concerning the early adolescent learner has recently begun to flourish and the implications of the results of studies and explorations are often confusing (Dorman, Lipsitz, and Verner, 1985). The teacher in the middle level school is faced with the "diversity" of the early adolescent and the continuous daily task of providing the best possible environment

for the student (p. 47). After reviewing research on the subject of children in grades six through eight, insights and implications for the classroom teacher may be noted and applications implemented to improve teacher effectiveness at the middle school level.

The intent of this investigation is to examine the recent research dealing with humor, praise, and criticism, and to evaluate the results with respect to the early adolescent. Some considerations for the middle school teacher will be presented after reporting the findings from all of the topics and their positive and negative effects on student learning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The use of humor, praise, and criticism can both positively and negatively affect the academic achievement and social growth of students at the middle level of education.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized in the form of an annotated bibliography of the literature dealing with the problem previously stated. The annotations will be arranged alphabetically under the headings and subheadings of each section.

The four major sections of this research are: humor, praise, criticism, and early adolescent literature. Each of the first three sections have subheadings entitled: positive effects and

negative effects. The subheadings for early adolescent literature are: general characteristics, behavior, self concept/self esteem, and middle school programs.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

An attempt was made to limit the literature used in this investigation to primary research sources. However, most of the research available on the study of the negative effects of criticism was found to be opinion and secondary in form. Most of the annotations represent studies completed within the last ten years. It should be noted that there were a few reliable studies dealing with humor that were completed before 1975. Because of the sample, population, and results of these studies they were included in this investigation.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms and definitions may be helpful to the reader and promote a stronger understanding of the research and material presented.

achievement- 1) accomplishment or proficiency of performance in a given skill or body of knowledge; 2) progress in school; theoretically different from intelligence but overlaps with it to a degree. (Good : 7)

adolescence- a period in human development occurring between

puberty and maturity and extending roughly from 13 or 14 years of age into the early 20's. (Good : 16)

aversive contingency- painful or unpleasant condition. (Good : 59)

contingency- a system of management with a type of contract planning with students; determines reasonable rewards that the students prize and then establishes the schedule of increments by which the students can earn the rewards. (Good : 133)

criticism- 1 a) the act of criticizing usually unfavorably; b) a critical observation or remark. (Webster : 197)

criticize- 1) to consider the merits and demerits of and judge accordingly; 2) to stress the faults of. (Webster : 197)

feedback- error correcting information returned to the control center of a servo mechanism enabling it to offset deviations in its course toward a particular goal. (Good : 237)

intrinsic motivation - determination of behavior that is resident within an activity and that sustains it as with autonomous acts and interests. (Good : 375)

motivation- broadly considered, the process of arousing, sustaining, and regulating activity. A concept limited to some aspect such as the energetics of behavior or purposive regulation. (Good : 375)

negative feedback- reciprocal interaction of parts of a dynamic system such that increasing output of part of the system so affects input as in turn to decrease output of another part. (Good : 238)

negative reinforcement- increase in response strength (usually some kind of avoidance response) occurring when the organism's response leads to decrease of an aversive external stimulus.

(Good : 487)

nonverbal- 1) being other than verbal; 2) involving minimal use of language. (Webster : 575)

positive reinforcement- increase in response strength brought about by the kinds of reinforcers that satisfy drives. (Good : 487)

praise- 1) to express a favorable judgement of:commend; 2) to glorify especially by ascription of perfections. (Webster : 667)

reinforcement- 1) strengthening of a conditioned response by reintroducing the original unconditioned stimulus; 2) increase in response strength when that response leads to the reduction of a drive. (Good : 486)

retention- the result of an excitation, experience, or response, occurring as a persisting aftereffect, that may serve as the basis for future modification of response or experience. (Good: 499)

self concept- the individual's perception of himself as a person, which includes his abilities, appearance, performance in his job and other phases of daily living. (Good : 524)

self esteem- the judgement and attitude an individual holds toward himself. (Good : 525)

transescent- the stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of

adolescence. Since puberty does not occur for all precisely at the same chronological age in human development, the tran-sescent designation is based upon the many physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes in body chemistry that appear prior to the puberty cycle to the time in which the body gains a practical degree of stabilization over these complex pubescent changes. (Eichorn : 46)

ANNOTATIONS

HUMOR

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Hauck, William E., and John W. Thomas. "The Relationship of Humor to Intelligence, Creativity, and Intentional and Incidental Learning." Journal of Experimental Education 40 (1972):52-55.

The two major purposes of this study were to determine if humor influences intentional and incidental learning and to ascertain the relationship between humor, intelligence, and creativity. Eighty fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders were given intelligence and creativity tests that established their IQ and creativity levels. A test of recall for object labels was given. Each of the three groups of students were asked to answer the questions with usual uses, unusual uses, and humorous uses for the objects. Results indicated that intentional learning was not significantly affected by humor, but that incidental learning was positively affected. Humor correlated highly with intelligence and creativity. The findings negated the assumption that humor facilitates intentional learning.

Kaplan, Robert M., and Gregory C. Pascoe. "Humorous Lectures and Humorous Examples : Some Effects upon Comprehension and Retention." Journal of Educational Psychology 69 (1977): 61-65.

Sixteen sections of an undergraduate introductory psychology course were shown one of four versions of a videotaped lecture on the Freudian Personality Theory. The lectures were classified as serious, concept humorous, nonconcept humorous, and mixed humorous. The subjects were tested immediately following the lecture and six weeks later on the concept related humorous items and content of the lecture material. Results indicated that total test performance was not significantly improved by the use of humor. However, the results from the posttest six weeks later showed that retention of the concepts humorously related was higher than those presented seriously.

Smith, Ronald E., James C. Ascough, Ronald R. Ettinger, and Don A. Nelson. "Humor, Anxiety, and Task Performance." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 19 (1971): 243-246.

In a study designed and completed at Purdue University, 215 undergraduate students were given the Test Anxiety Scale at the beginning of the semester. The results were used to divide the students into three groups categorized as high, moderate, and low anxiety. Two forms (humorous and nonhumorous), of a multiple choice test covering class material were designed and distributed to the students as a midterm examination. Results from the tests showed that the highly anxious students given the humorous form of the test scored significantly higher than those given the nonhumorous version. Discussion of the results explained the reasons for the findings and possible repercussions in the educational community.

Tamashiro, Roy T. "Children's Humor : A Developmental View." The Elementary School Journal 80 (1979): 69-75.

Through an examination of studies by Piaget, Wolfenstein, Loevinger, and Kohlberg, the author categorizes children's humor into five developmental stages. Examples of each type of humor, when it is likely to occur, and how it can be applied in the classroom are especially helpful. Tamashiro offers suggestions designed to aid the teacher in assessing the student's developmental stages, understanding the humor students most enjoy, and using humor to aid instruction and discipline. (Tamashiro is the department head of early and middle childhood education at Ohio State University. He has written numerous articles published in Elementary School Journal on the subject of humor and children.) Appendix A

Wandersee, James H. "Humor as a Teaching Strategy." The American Biology Teacher 44 (1982): 212-218.

The author presents the history, characteristics, benefits, and categories of humor based upon previous research and studies. Tables of humor and figures where humor can be used in the classroom are graphically represented. Discussion of theories from Tamashiro, Maslow, and Kohlberg, with examples of practical applications are offered to the science teacher. (Wandersee is a professor of biology and science education at Dr. Martin Luther College in Minnesota. His work has appeared in ABT regularly and he was a presenter at the 1980 National American Biology Teachers convention.)

Ziv, Avner. "Facilitating Effects of Humor on Creativity." Journal of Educational Psychology 68 (1976): 318-322.

In an attempt to determine the effects of humor on creativity, 282 tenth grade students were studied. The students were separated into four groups and pretested with the Torrence Creativity Test, Form A. Three weeks later, two of the groups listened to a recording of a popular comedian. All four groups were then tested with Form B of the TCT. The results showed significant differences between the groups that listened to the record and those that did not. Discussion of the study implied that laughter and humorous enjoyment facilitated creativity, especially in originality and divergent thinking. Suggestions for the use of humor in teaching creative writing were included.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Bryant, Jennings, Paul W. Comisky, Jon S. Crane, and Dolf Zillmann. "Relationship Between College Teachers' Use of Humor in the Classroom and Students' Evaluations of Their Teachers." Journal of Educational Psychology 72 (1980): 511-519.

In a study conducted on a college campus, seventy courses were randomly selected and one student from each course tape recorded a lesson without knowledge of the purpose for the recording. The humor from the lesson was transcribed and judged by two students. Each class sampled was given a teacher evaluation form that contained thirteen items. The items were categorized into four factors: appeal, competence, delivery, and effectiveness. Results from the correlational analysis of frequency of humor, format, spontaneity, relation to educational message, themes, and character involvement showed that male teachers were rated more effective overall if they used humor in their classrooms. However, female teachers were rated less effective on competence, delivery, and overall effectiveness when they frequently used humor. Discussion of the results indicated that society may have influenced the sexual inequality evident in the analysis of the study.

Pollio, Howard R., and Charlene Kubo Bainum. "Are Funny Groups Good at Solving Problems? A Methodological Evaluation and Some Preliminary Results." Small Group Behavior 14 (1983): 379-404.

The study was designed to determine if witty and laughter-filled groups of students are better at solving problems than non-witty groups. 195 graduate students participated in the two part study. Part one of the study used problem solving, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation with videotapes to determine witty and non-witty individuals. Part two organized the groups into high, medium, and low wit categories. Two unrelated problems were solved and the results were recorded. Tables and explanations of results, correlations, predictability, and consistency were included. Discussion of the results indicated that joking and witty remarks had no clear effect on the groups' problem solving ability.

Terry, Roger L., and Margaret E. Woods. "Effects of Humor on the Test Performance of Elementary School Children." Psychology in the Schools 12 (1975): 182-185.

The study of the effects of humor initiated by previous research and philosophy was carried out using two third-grade classes and two fifth-grade classes. The testing materials were comprised of a written paragraph, short answer informational questions, a mathematical problem, a paragraph sequencing events, and a second math problem. One class of each grade level was given a humorous version of the test and the other was given the nonhumorous version. Results showed that humor lowered the performance of the third grade students and had both positive and negative effects on the fifth grade students. The assumption that performance is affected by humor was substantiated.

Townsend, Michael A., and Peggy Mahoney. "Humor and Anxiety: Effects on Class Test Performance." Psychology in the Schools 18 (1981): 228-234.

A study measuring achievement, state anxiety, and trait anxiety was carried out using 106 students enrolled in undergraduate courses. The students were given the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory and randomly assigned to the nonhumorous and humorous versions of the achievement tests. The results indicated that high anxiety students were negatively affected by humor. Discussion offered several explanations for the results and arguments for the need of further research in the area of humor and anxiety.

PRAISE

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Ayers, Jerry B., and Michael E. Rohr. "Human Relations Skills and Teacher Characteristics." Education 100 (1980): 348-351.

This study was designed to determine the relationship of skills in human relations with characteristics measured by observation in classrooms, student observations, and principal evaluations of teacher effectiveness. The subjects, teachers from one Tennessee University, answered two questionnaires. The Index of Discrimination (IOD) and Index of Response (IOR) were the major questionnaires and grade point averages from completed undergraduate work in psychology were compared. Results of the study showed that subjects who scored high on the IOD and IOR responded to problems more easily than subjects with high grade point averages in psychological studies. The results also showed that teachers who scored higher on the IOR praised more, accepted student ideas and feelings, used less criticism, and spent less time lecturing.

Deni, James R. "Teacher Attention in Producing Effective Behavior Change in Students." Education 99 (1979): 406-413.

This article was designed to inform the reader of the importance and effectiveness of teacher attention as a reinforcer of positive behavior. The author reviewed the theories and studies of behaviorists and the usefulness of behavior modification in the classroom. A system for using teacher attention as a social reinforcer was presented with examples and pairing techniques. The author stated that students in secondary level schools respond less to public attention than private recognition. Middle level and secondary level educators were persuaded to use nonpublic methods of praise. Seven suggestions for making teacher attention more meaningful were presented in outline form.

Gettinger, Maribeth. "Student Behaviors, Teacher Reinforcement, Student Ability and Learning." Contemporary Educational Psychology 8 (1983): 391-402.

A study of ninety-eight fourth grade boys was designed to determine the effects of student on-task behavior, student ability, and teacher praise on learning. The pupils were enrolled in a summer school program and the study involved three sessions with three different sets of children. The subjects were ranked according to IQ and previous achievement test scores. Each observable student on-task behavior and teacher praise of correct response was recorded in observation sessions that lasted ten minutes. The findings implied that teacher praise had a positive significant effect on academic achievement and of the material taught in the sessions. The ability of the students was shown to be the major factor in student achievement. Conclusion material suggested that tasks should relate appropriately to student ability and teacher praise should be used to enhance learning.

Harackiewicz, Judith M. "The Effects of Reward Contingency and Performance Feedback on Intrinsic Motivation." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 37 (1979): 1352-1363.

Sixty-four male and twenty-nine female high school students were given pretests to evaluate their interest and motivation in the first part of this study. In an attempt to negate the theory that positive feedback increases intrinsic motivation, the subjects were asked to find hidden names in picture puzzles. The students were grouped into six categories varying reward, feedback, and contingency information. Posttests given in the last part of the study evaluated the student's perceptions of the difficulty, interest, rewards, and motivation. Results showed that the students who received positive feedback believed their performance was higher after the testing. Other test results showed that rewards reduced intrinsic motivation. Positive verbal feedback was found to increase intrinsic motivation and performance perceptions.

Lysakowski, Richard S., and Herbert J. Walberg. "Classroom Reinforcement and Learning : A Quantitative Synthesis." Journal of Educational Research 75 (1981): 69-77.

The purpose of this study was to synthesize the material of the studies available and provide a summary of the results of research dealing with reinforcement. A detailed description of the search, acceptance, rejection, and synthesis of appropriate research is given with statistical explanations. Conclusions from the results determined that reinforcement significantly improved student achievement and classroom management. Students most affected by reinforcement were girls and those in special schools.

Phillips, Robert H. "Increasing Positive Self Referrent Statements To Improve Self Esteem in Low-Income Elementary School Children." Journal of School Psychology 22 (1984): 155-163.

A behavior modification style experiment intended to determine what effects teacher praise has on the self esteem of children was performed using thirty children from upper elementary grades. The children were initially given the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (CESI). The experimental group was given individual teacher praise for statements made about positive self worth. The teachers were trained to recognize positive statements and were given praise-responses to use with the pupils. The CESI post-test scores of the experimental group showed significant improvement after the procedure. The results supported the theory that praise improves and positively affects self esteem.

Schunk, Dale H. "Sequential Attributional Feedback and Children's Achievement Behaviors." Journal of Educational Psychology 76 (1984): 1159-1169.

Forty third grade children were the subjects of a study designed to determine how feedback influences pupil motivation, performance, and efficiency. The pupils in four groups were given ability feedback and effort feedback in different sequences while working with subtraction problem solving. The results revealed that the children who received initial ability feedback (success attributed to ability), were much more efficient and successful than those who received effort feedback (success attributed to effort). The ability feedback pupils attributed their own success to their ability much more than the effort feedback pupils. A second study with another group of forty children determined that the children's self perceptions before training did not alter the effects of the first study. The implications from the results for classroom teachers were that praise and feedback should be ability oriented for maximum effect.

Stinson, Michael, and John M. Belmont. "Effects of Feedback Manipulation and Feedback Preference Upon Children's Performance." Journal of Genetic Psychology 135 (1979): 159-160.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether social-feedback and self-feedback are determinants of success or failure. Forty-eight children in the fourth and fifth grades were separated into three groups: social-feedback, self-feedback, and no feedback. The students dropped colored marbles into respective tubes and received feedback in two of the groupings after each trial. The results showed that feedback in general improved performance, but that no difference between social- or self-feedback was present.

Thomason, Julia. "Nurturing the Nature of Early Adolescents-or A Day at the Zoo." Middle School Journal 15 (1983): 3-6.

Thomason relates and interprets the findings and implications of Piaget (1970) and Havighurst (1953) studies dealing with learning strategies and developmental tasks. The author proposes seven techniques intended to enhance student learning in the middle grades. Havighurst's three categories of developmental tasks; intellectual, social, and physical thrust, are described with classroom techniques and examples. The author concludes with research based theories meant to increase effective teaching at the middle school level. Praise, in private, for acceptable behavior and personal growth is noted as being effective at improving the student's self concept. (Thomason has written various articles for MSJ and other journals on the subject of early adolescents.)

Woolfolk, Anita E. "Student Learning and Performance Under Varying Conditions of Teacher Verbal and Non Verbal Evaluative Communication." Journal of Educational Psychology 70 (1978): 87-94.

128 students in the sixth grade were the subjects of a study that attempted to determine the relationship of nonverbal teacher behavior to student achievement. Four combinations of verbal, nonverbal, positive, and negative teacher responses were taught in micro lessons to participating teachers and then presented randomly in a controlled classroom atmosphere. Results revealed that student performance was significantly higher when the teacher response was verbally positive and nonverbally negative. The least effective response was the verbal-negative and nonverbal-positive type. Other results displayed that verbal and nonverbal responses alone had no significant effect on student achievement.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Barton, Edward J., and Frank R. Ascione. "Social Reinforcer Satiation : An Outcome of Frequency Not Ambiguity - Sometimes." Developmental Psychology 14 (1978): 363-370.

A study with ninety-six third and fourth grade boys and girls was completed in Logan, Utah. The subjects were asked to choose combinations of cards and were assigned to receive eight classifications of reinforcement. The reinforcement categories ranged from high-frequency subject-contingent reinforcement to no reinforcement. The results showed that praise was a weak social reinforcer and that boys in the low-frequency reinforcement group answered more questions correctly than those in the high frequency groups. The results do not support the theory that a subject's perceptions of the reinforcer were dependent on the sex of the subject.

Brophy, Jere E., and Carolyn M. Evertson. "Motivation and Incentives." In Learning From Teaching - A Developmental Perspective. Boston:Allyn and Bacon, 1976.

The authors reported on a two year study involving 125 second and third grade teachers. Praise correlated negatively with high achieving, high socioeconomic groups of children. Positive correlations for praise and achievement were only shown with groups of low socioeconomic, low achieving pupils. Frequent and ungenune praise often caused unnecessary competition and jealousy that was detrimental to the classroom atmosphere. Credible and genuine praise appropriately used had a positive effect on some of the pupils and their achievement and motivation.

Gagne', Ellen D., J. William Moore, William E. Hauck, and Robert V. Hoy. "The Effect on Children's Performance of a Discrepancy between Adult Expectancy and Feedback Statements." Journal of Experimental Education 47 (1979): 320-324.

Forty-eight high-achieving students with high or low IQs were the subjects in a study to test the effects of discrepant and consonant combinations of expectation and feedback (positive expectations-negative feedback and positive expectations-positive feedback). The hypothesis of the study was that discrepant combinations would increase performance more than consonant combinations. The results showed that discrepant combinations of feedback and expectancy increased performance only in high IQ, high achieving students. Low IQ children obtained higher performance levels when given negative feedback and the expectancy made no difference. Repercussions of the results and possible implications for classroom teachers were discussed.

Sewell, Trevor, Frank H. Farley, John Manni, and Portia Hunt. "Motivation, Social Reinforcement, and Intelligence as Predictors of Academic Achievement in Black Adolescents." Adolescence 17 (1982): 647-656.

A study was completed in Philadelphia using forty-nine seventh and eighth grade below-average intelligence black students. The study attempted to evaluate intelligence, achievement motivation, and social reinforcement contributions toward achievement. Results showed that neither self-responsibility nor positive reinforcement showed a significant relationship to achievement.

Van Hecke, Madeleine, Robert J. Tracy, Sheldon Cotler, and Sheila C. Ribordy. "Approval Versus Achievement Motives in Seventh Grade Girls." Sex Roles 11 (1984): 33-41.

The authors designed this study of eighty seventh-grade boys and girls with three purposes in mind. The main purpose was to determine whether there are differences in achievement behavior between boys and girls. Another purpose was to learn whether girls would achieve at lower levels than boys when faced with social approval or praise. The third purpose was to ascertain the sex differences in the initial expectancy of success. Results disagreed with the findings of previous studies by showing that girls performed in an achievement oriented manner more than boys. The girls were not found to act differently when given social approval for nonsuccessful tasks. No significant differences in success expectancies were shown in the analysis. Computerized testing and directions were used and may have caused the discrepancy with results from previous studies. The presence of the computer terminal detracted from the adult giving the approval. The authors noted that approval and praise made no significant difference in achievement with boys or girls.

CRITICISM

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Brimmer, Larry Dan. "The Effects of Praise and Blame on Writing." English Journal 71 (1982): 58-60.

Sixteen eleventh and twelfth grade students were given a special writing course to increase their proficiency and help them qualify for the California minimum competency requirements. An experiment that provided negative and positive reinforcement comments on the students' writing was designed to support the research findings that stated that negative reinforcement does not weaken achievement. The results showed that negative reinforcement did not reduce achievement, but did lower the students' motivation and the value of their work.

Brophy, Jere E., and Carolyn M. Evertson. "Motivation and Incentives." In Learning From Teaching - A Developmental Perspective. Boston:Allyn and Bacon, 1976.

A review of research findings from the studies by the authors was presented with examples and situations. The Texas Teacher Effectiveness Study was a two-year study of 125 second and third grade teachers. Observations were long range and behavior was recorded using the Brophy-Good system for observation. Some of the results were correlated with other theories and detailed explanations with classroom examples were contained in the book. Criticism of poor work, when given in a non-hostile manner, was found to increase student learning and positive self concept.

Holland, E.L., and T.F. McLaughlin. "Using Public Posting and Group Consequences to Manage Student Behavior During Supervision." Journal of Educational Research 76 (1982): 29-34.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of response cost (payment for misbehavior), posting public results, and group contingencies on reducing unwanted behaviors in the elementary and intermediate grades. Classes were observed with eight inappropriate behaviors recorded by trained observers. Students were notified of their unwanted behaviors and points were taken away from the whole class. The results showed that taking away points (negative), group consequences (peer pressure), and putting up lost points for the public to see had a significant relationship with the decrease of inappropriate behaviors.

Moore, Shirley G., and Bruce Henderson. "Effects of Instructions and Reward Conditions on the Generalization of a Prohibition." Developmental Psychology 14 (1978): 445-446.

Forty-eight preschool children were given a building task and instructions to use only big (or little) blocks. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of rewards, both positive and negative, on completion of a task. The pupils all followed the directions, but the ones faced with no reward for incorrect completion showed less creativity. The evidence also showed that children worked more constructively when negative feedback was given than when they were praised.

Nucci, Larry P. "Evaluating Teachers as Social Agents : Students' Ratings of Domain Appropriate and Domain Inappropriate Teacher Responses and Transgressions." American Educational Research Journal 21 (1984): 367-378.

This study was undertaken to support the hypothesis that students rate teacher responses higher if they are appropriate to the transgressions than if the responses are inappropriate. Twenty students in grades three, five, and seven were shown drawings of misbehaviors and listened to recorded teacher responses. The results were analyzed using repeated measures analysis of variance. The findings supported the hypothesis and revealed that students rated teachers high when they used appropriate responses. The least effective response, determined by the subjects, was the simple command type of correction. Discussion of the data provided various reasons for the results and implications for the teacher using corrective responses.

Siggers, Walter W. "Changing Teacher Correcting Behavior: Using Aversive and Positive Contingencies." Educational Research Quarterly 5 (1980): 68-75.

This study was designed to determine the effect of teacher training in the use of aversive and positive contingencies. The subjects were eleven female teachers in a suburban community elementary school. Initial interviews and questionnaires completed by the subjects revealed that punishment was an often-used method for behavior correction. The subjects were trained to use contracts and aversive contingencies when faced with disruptive students. After training, the contracts and experiments were continued. The results of records and data from observers showed that aversive contingencies were effective in reducing 85% of the unwanted behaviors. The author suggested that teachers need to be taught how to punish effectively.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Ciminillo, Lewis M. "Discipline : The School's Dilemma." Adolescence 15 (1980): 1-12.

A comprehensive review of discipline and its relationship to school organization and policies was presented by the author in research based form. Reasons for problems and the loss of control in the schools were described with various methods of discipline being used presently. Views of learning theorists and psychologists were expressed concerning aversive and positive reinforcement. General agreement among theorists existed when negative reinforcement was discussed. This agreement considered negative reinforcement to be detrimental to the disciplinary situation. Alternative disciplinary methods were discussed and presented for use in the classroom and schools.

Hertzman, Andrew J. "Discipline and the Use of Punishment."
Education 104 (1983): 17-22.

The author suggested that punishment is considered essential for the controlled classroom environment by recent press and public attitude surveys. Punishment is defined and thirteen guidelines are presented in outline form. The guidelines are justified by citing studies designed to discover facts and implications of properly imposed punishment. A list of three advantages and seven disadvantages of punishment is provided with six basic questions that must be answered before the administering of punishment. The author stated that punishment may be a necessary factor in the classroom, but should not be a replacement for positive reinforcement.

Hood, Myra R., and James M. Hood. "Steps Toward Poor Discipline or What Not to Do in the Classroom." Education 102 (1981): 170-172.

The authors outlined and described nine teacher variables designed to improve behavior management in the classroom. The variables are: teaching style, personality problems, over-reacting, friendship and the student teacher relationship, mass punishment, ignoring a cry for help, reward centers, false promise or punishment, and breaking the student's spirit approach. Ignoring unwanted behaviors is more effective than openly criticizing the student.

Vought, James J. "Punishment and Alternative Strategies for Decreasing Behavior." Personnel and Guidance Journal 62 (1984): 588-591.

Punishment has become an accepted strategy for decreasing unwanted or unacceptable behavior in the classroom. Procedures vary from verbal reprimands and facial expressions to restraint procedures and taking away privileges. Positive strategies and alternative uses of punishment are described using specific classroom examples. The author stressed that punishment and verbal criticism must be used only to stop the unwanted behavior and not to humiliate the student in front of his/her peers.

EARLY ADOLESCENTS

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Eichorn, Donald H. "Focus on the Learner Leads to a Clearer Middle Level Picture." NASSP Bulletin 67 (1983): 45-48.

The author defined transescence and presented a list of ten learner traits which apply specifically to the middle school student. Each trait was described and examples of methods, activities, and programs considered useful to the middle level educator were presented. The author stressed the need for intellectual growth compatible with the student's cognitive functioning level and the need for activities and classroom management that are non-threatening and non-embarrassing. (Eichorn has published many articles and the book, The Middle School. He is superintendent of the Lewisburg Area School District in Pennsylvania.)

Onyehalu, Anthony S. "Maslow's Theory of Motivation : Its Relevance For Adult-Adolescent Relationships." Adolescence 18 (1983): 433-439.

The understanding and use of Maslow's Theory of Motivation when dealing with adolescents was discussed and interpreted in this article. The author offered suggestions for teachers, guidance personnel, and administrators. Motivational needs for adolescents must be recognized and attainment of these needs must be assisted by the educating personnel as well as the general public. Problems associated with the adolescent population could be lessened by present understanding of the motivational needs of adolescents.

Protinsky, Howard, and Shirley Farrier. "Self Image Changes in Pre-Adolescents and Adolescents." Adolescence 15 (1980): 887-893.

The study of 210 students ranging in age from nine to eighteen was designed to answer questions concerning self image stability, the degree of self consciousness, overall self esteem, and the effect of self image or consciousness on depression among adolescents. Five-, seven-, and six-item Guttman Scales were the measures used to test the hypotheses. Analysis of the data revealed that the pre-adolescent (9-11 years of age) suffered the most from instability of self and that 15-16 year olds were the most self conscious of the four age groups tested. Overall results demonstrated that there is no firm evidence that adolescents live in turmoil or threat of depression.

- Webb, Thomas E., Chris A. VanDevere, and Jeanne S. Ott. "A Comparative Study of Affective Distress in Elementary School Children and Adolescents." Elementary School Counseling and Guidance 18 (1984): 188-193.

Using the Structured Pediatric Psychosocial Interview (SPPT), the authors compared the affective distress of elementary school children with that of older children and adolescents. 1015 students participated in the study and were given nine scores that represented their rating with respect to the SPPT categories. The results indicated that elementary school children showed affective distress more than adolescents in the categories of unhappiness, self doubt, tension, and arousal. Conclusions from the authors stated that the previously believed ideas about adolescent turmoil and conflict are refuted with the evidence from this study. Recommendations for further study and use of the SPPT are included.

BEHAVIOR

- Everhart, Robert B. "The Nature of 'Goofing Off' Among Junior High School Adolescents." Adolescence 17 (1982): 177-188.

The organizational aspect of the junior high school causes students to develop their sense of community and participation with each other by goofing off. The author, in a two year study of 1000 adolescents, ascertained the meaning and determinants of goofing off as it was perceived by the students. After analyzing the data from two and one-half hour interviews and observations of each student, the author determined the temporal and spatial dimensions of goofing off. Implications for educators were that the students need opportunities to express their community growth and to express critical thought in the junior high classroom.

Geiger, Kathleen M., and Elliot Turiel. "Disruptive School Behavior and Concepts of Social Convention in Early Adolescents." Journal of Educational Psychology 75 (1983): 677-685.

The disruptive behavior of junior high school students was related to the studies and corresponding levels of social-conventional concepts developed by Turiel. Levels four and five of the scale show negative and positive developmental concepts and relate to the ages of seventh and eighth grade students. The forty-two subjects were interviewed and placed in their level of social convention. Twenty-two of the subjects were considered to be disruptive by counselors, teachers, and administrators at the junior high level, but showed little or no disruptive behavior at the elementary level. The results of the testing showed that the behavior of junior high school students is largely dependent upon the student's level of social convention. The disruptive subjects at the second testing showed shifts to non-disruptive when they had advanced to level five. The findings partially validated the theory that behavior is related to levels of social convention, not intellect and background.

Veldman, Donald J., and Murray Worsham. "Types of Student Classroom Behavior." Journal of Educational Research 76 (1983): 204-209.

In a study designed to determine groups of student behavior, 909 junior high school students were observed in classroom situations. The subjects were grouped into four categories: good students, outgoing, rebellious, and withdrawn. Using the Coder Ratings of Students, the students were compared with regard to sex, ethnic group, and math and English composition. The results of the groupings and achievement testing demonstrated that the good and outgoing students were higher in ability and achievement than the rebellious and withdrawn students. Academic praise had a positive effect on all of the groups and academic criticism positively affected the rebellious and outgoing students the most.

SELF CONCEPT/SELF ESTEEM

Arth, Alfred A., Lucille M. Freeman, and Edward J. Lawton.
"Introducing Competition to the Middle Level Classroom:
Providing for Success." NASSP Bulletin 68 (1984): 63-68.

The authors described the negative effect that competition has on the self concept of the middle school student when it is not introduced and implemented properly. Five concerns of the student and teacher: mastery, competitive skill, entering competition, the time to compete, and winning, were discussed with the descriptions of their relationships to the competition of those involved. The authors concluded that because of the nature of the early adolescent student's concern with peer opinion, opportunities for activities that promote teacher and peer criticism should be avoided.

Calsyn, Robert J., Christine Pennell, and Mary Harter. "Are Affective Education Programs More Effective With Girls Than With Boys?" Elementary School Guidance and Counseling 19 (1984): 132-140.

The authors devised and completed a study to determine what effect affective education programs have on students, with specific comparisons of the effects on boys or girls. Previous studies, results, and significant differences were discussed. Two studies were completed to validate the results with similar groups of students. Study one involved pretesting twenty-four sixth grade students using the Index of Self Esteem, and grouping them for the seven week affective education program. The program was developed and administered by a trained educator and the regular classroom teacher. Results from both of the studies revealed that self esteem improved with all of the subjects. However, overall improvement was higher and longer lasting with the girls than the boys. The importance of self esteem in early adolescents was questioned as a determinant of academic achievement.

Ellis, David W., and Lucy T. Davis. "The Development of Self Concept Boundaries Across the Adolescent Years." Adolescence 17 (1982): 695-710.

The self concept of an adolescent shows definite changes and developmental stages as age increases. Various studies and research theories were the basis of this article that described adolescent self concept, the shifting patterns, and a model of development that is age-related. The relationship between self concept and depression was explained by data collected from interviews with adolescents. Depression progresses in three stages when the adolescent experiences negative feelings and has negative future expectations.

Hayes, Richard L. "A Re-View of Adolescent Identity Formation: Implications for Education." Adolescence 17 (1982): 153-165.

The author presented a review of research on adolescent thought and development. Stages of cognitive development and the nature of adolescent thought were defined by Kohlberg, Piaget, Selman, and Loevinger. The author offered justification for involving adolescents in programs that stress psychological movement into higher levels of thought. The adolescent is most powerfully affected by his peers and steps must be taken to encourage proper non-threatening peer interaction.

Tierno, Mark J. "Responding to Self-Concept Disturbance Among Early Adolescents: A Psychosocial View for Educators." Adolescence 18 (1983): 577-584.

A review of the studies and literature related to middle school students and self concept was presented with examples of theories and ideas applicable to middle school programs. The transescent individual is acutely aware of social roles and acceptance. The author correlated various research findings and offered practical suggestions for the middle school educator. Recommendations included were: changes by teachers in behavior management (accentuate positive behaviors and self pride, and handle negative behavior privately to avoid public criticism); offer programs allowing group discussion on social values; and have students take part in scheduling choices.

Wilkerson, Jackie, H.O. Protinsky, Jr., J.W. Maxwell, and Marvin Lentner. "Alienation and Ego Identity in Adolescents." Adolescence 17 (1982): 133-139.

147 students between the ages of fourteen and nineteen were the subjects in a study designed to determine the relationship between ego identity and alienation in adolescents. The instruments used were a 41-item scale developed by Mackey and Ahlgren and the Ego Identity Scale by Rasmussen. The data correlational analysis revealed that two alienation dimensions, personal incapacity and guidelessness, were significantly associated with ego identity. The students felt that they had no control over their own lives when those dimensions were present. The authors suggested that parents and teachers should be supportive and promote self esteem in the adolescent.

Yeger, Trudi A., and Solveiga Miezeitis. "Self-Concept and Classroom Behavior of Pre-Adolescent Pupils." Journal of Classroom Interaction 15 (1980): 31-37.

The study of self concept in children as it relates to academic achievement was completed using twenty-eight children that ranged in age from ten to twelve years. Self reported measures of self concept were used to group the students in observable situations. The overall observational data qualified the hypothesis that high self concept students had significantly more interaction with peers and teachers. The academic achievement of children with high self concept was confirmed as being higher than the achievement of low self concept children. The classroom teacher must take each student's self concept into consideration when interacting with students and planning and managing activities.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Beane, James A. "Self-Concept and Esteem In the Middle Level School." NASSP Bulletin 67 (1983): 63-71.

The author described the physical, psychological, and cognitive aspects of growth that cause difficulty for the transescent in the educational process. Eight programs found to be successfully self-oriented and effective with transescents were described in the article. Guidelines for principals and suggestions for middle level educators provided thought-provoking and helpful hints to increase middle school effectiveness. (Beane is an associate professor in the Department of Administration, Supervision, and Curriculum at St. Bonaventure University. He has contributed research in the field of self esteem and has written and published articles concerning the middle school student in the Middle School Journal, Educational Leadership, and Transescence.)

Dorman, Gayle, Joan Lipsitz, and Pat Verner. "Improving Schools for Young Adolescents." Educational Leadership 42 (1985): 44-49.

The seven developmental needs of children in the early adolescent age group are: 1) diversity, 2) self-exploration, 3) meaningful participation, 4) positive social interaction, 5) physical activity, 6) competence and achievement, and 7) structure and clear limits. These needs and a program for assessment of middle schools, The Middle Grades Assessment Program, are discussed in relation to a San Francisco middle school where changes were made to improve the success of the school. (The authors are directors of the Center for Early Adolescence in North Carolina.) Appendix C

Lipsitz, Joan. "Educating the Early Adolescent." American Education 17 (1981): 13-17.

Four successful middle schools are discussed and their programs, diverse styles, and staff relations with students are described in this article. The schools were: Western Middle School in North Carolina, Region Seven Middle School in Detroit, Noe Middle School in Louisville, and Shoreham-Wading River Middle School in New York. The four schools adapted and implemented programs and curriculums to meet the needs of the physically and psychologically changing young adolescents. Problems encountered with the middle school student and challenges to teachers, administrators, and parents are outlined with four different solutions intended to promote positive attitudes and academic success. (Lipsitz is the director of the Center for Early Adolescence in North Carolina.)

Thomason, Julia, and Billy Williams. "Middle Schools Are For Me." Educational Leadership 40 (1982): 54-58.

The five year developmental plan for implementing a middle school program in Newport News, Virginia, is described in detailed sections. The staff development procedures for philosophy, goals, principals, assistant principals, and teachers offered suggestions to other school districts attempting to begin a middle school program. The results after the first year of implementation show teachers praising the development and working of the program.

Wiles, Jon, Joseph Bondi, and Ronald Stodghill. "Miracle on Main Street : The St. Louis Story." Educational Leadership 40 (1982): 52-53.

The St. Louis City School District implemented a middle school program that was designed to combat attendance, discipline problems, and racial problems. The five year plan, begun in 1980, was developed with the help of parents, teachers, students, and administrators. Results of evaluations from two years of study of the program showed significant gains in student achievement, attendance, and less discipline problems.

SUMMARY

The positive effects of humor in the classroom are related to anxiety lessening and creativity enhancement. The earlier findings of Smith et al., (1971) determined that humor positively affected high anxiety students in test situations. Creativity was significantly improved by humor in the studies completed by Hauck and Thomas (1972) and Ziv (1976).

Incidental learning and retention of material were positively affected by the use of humor on tests and in lecture material (Hauck and Thomas, 1972; Kaplan and Pascoe, 1977). Terry and Woods (1975) discovered that the introduction of humorous items on verbal achievement tests caused fifth grade students to improve their previous performance (p. 185).

Later research designed to study the effects of humor on anxiety and achievement had negative or insignificant results in many cases. Townsend and Mahoney (1981) completely negated the findings of Smith et al., (1971), by stating that humor caused highly anxious students to perform lower on tests (p. 233). Humorous versions of math and verbal tests lowered the performance of fifth grade students in math and third grade students on both tests (Terry and Woods, 1975). Kaplan and Pascoe (1977) found no relationship between humor and test performance and Hauck and Thomas (1972) found that humor did not affect intentional learning.

Bryant et al., (1980) determined that the use of humor

in college lecture classes decreased the overall effectiveness of female teachers and increased the effectiveness of male teachers (p. 518). This study also showed that hostile and aggressive humor was most effective for the female teacher (p. 517).

Tamashiro (1979) offered a developmental view and suggested that teachers first attempt to determine the stage of humor of their children, and then use appropriate types of humor to enhance creativity and classroom atmosphere (p. 74). The stages of humor, adapted to correspond with Piaget and Loevinger, illustrate the need for the educator to be aware of the student's level before using humor in the classroom. (See Appendix A.)

Positive verbal feedback or praise had a significantly positive effect on achievement (Gettinger, 1983; Stinson and Belmont, 1979; Lysakowski and Walberg, 1981), intrinsic motivation, and performance perceptions (Harackiewicz, 1979). Phillips (1980) found that praise improved self esteem in children from upper elementary grades. Schunck (1984) and Gettinger (1983) revealed that praise, when it is ability-oriented, is the most effective type of reinforcement when achievement improvement is desired (Schunck, 1984, pp. 166-167; Gettinger, 1983, pp. 400-401).

Woolfolk (1978) noted that verbal positive reinforcement, accompanied with a negative nonverbal response, was the most effective type of reinforcement to use at the sixth grade

level. Verbal response alone was not shown to be significantly effective at that level (p. 93), and negative verbal responses combined with positive nonverbal responses were found to be detrimental to the classroom atmosphere and behavior management (p. 92).

Thomason (1983) and Deni (1979) both reviewed research concerning praise that is publicly rewarded. Their analysis of research findings stated that praise given publicly was less effective than when given privately to middle and secondary level students (Thomason, 1983, p. 4; Deni, 1979, p. 410).

Ayres and Rohr (1980), through a study of teachers, discovered that teachers who praised more scored higher on the Index of Response (p. 349). These teachers were also rated higher by principals and students and were considered more adept in human relations (p. 350).

The negative aspect of praise is illustrated in the studies by Brophy and Evertson (1976), Barton and Ascione (1978), and Gagne et al., (1979). Brophy and Evertson (1976) discovered negative correlations between praise and high achieving students. Barton and Ascione (1978) found that children, especially boys, subjected to high amounts of praise performed at lower levels than those who were given less positive reinforcement (pp. 365-366). Gagne et al., (1979) discovered that the combination of positive expectations and negative feedback was more effective with high IQ fourth grade pupils than the combination of positive expectations and positive feedback. The

low IQ subjects performed at higher levels when given negative feedback (p. 323).

Sewell et al., (1982) found that positive reinforcement had no significant relationship with achievement in below average IQ seventh and eighth grade black students. The authors attributed this finding to the population and their cultural background and familial surroundings (p. 653). Van Hecke et al., (1984) also found that praise made no difference in achievement of seventh grade girls. The authors blamed the testing procedures for the contradictory results (p. 39).

Criticism, negative feedback, and negative reinforcement were found to produce positive results with achievement and behavior in most of the studies presented. Brophy and Evertson (1976) revealed that criticism, when used appropriately, increased student learning and positive self concept at the second and third grade levels (pp. 97, 134). Moore and Henderson (1978) found that preschool children worked on task more with negative feedback than with praise. Gagne et al., (1979) had similar results with fourth grade pupils who were at low IQ levels (p. 323).

Results from studies dealing with criticism and behavior show that criticism or negative feedback is effective in reducing or eliminating unwanted behavior. Aversive contingencies reduced eighty-five per cent of the undesirable classroom behaviors in the study by Siggers (1980, pp. 71-72). Holland and McLaughlin (1982) also found that negative reinforcement

in the form of group consequences and public posting of negative results, significantly decreased inappropriate behaviors (p. 33).

Student ratings, in a study by Nucci (1984), had teachers who used domain appropriate responses ranked highest of all other teachers. Misbehaviors were criticized with relation to social order and the welfare of group management (p.377). Simple commands were considered inappropriate and ineffective because alternative behaviors were not offered to the disruptive student (p. 376).

Brimmer (1982) determined that negative reinforcement did not lessen achievement, but did lower student motivation and performance value. His study population was fairly small, sixteen subjects, and had previously experienced failure in writing (p. 58).

The negative aspects of criticism are represented in articles that are reports of research. Ciminillo (1980) reviewed theories and represented the idea that negative reinforcement causes more problems than the disruptive behavior that elicited the response (p.10). Hood and Hood (1981) concurred with Ciminillo (1980) by stating that ignoring undesirable behavior was often effective in decreasing that behavior. Hood and Hood (1981) suggested that the age level of the student is important when making the decision of the the proper strategy to use (p. 171), and that the older student responds negatively to open criticism (p. 172).

Vought (1984), and Hartzman (1983) defended the use of punishment in appropriate situations and without personal or hostile attitudes. Vought (1984) suggested that using negative reinforcement or criticism to humiliate the student is detrimental to the student's self concept and classroom atmosphere (p. 590). However, Vought (1984) cited no research when that theory was described.

Early adolescent behaviors, physical and psychological characteristics, and social and emotional needs were investigated in the last section of annotations. Eichorn (1983) defined the transescent individual and developed a list of ten learner traits associated with the middle level student (p.46). (See Appendix B.) Eichorn stressed that educators need to adjust the programs and curriculums of the middle school to accomodate the needs of the middle level student. He encouraged the administrative personnel to design programs that are suitable to the student's cognitive levels and are not threatening or embarrassing in nature (p. 47).

Onyehalu (1983) analyzed Maslow's Theory of Motivation with respect to adolescents. He inferred that the scolding, ridiculing, and destructively criticizing of the adolescent causes friction between the student and the adult and denies the student his/her basic psychological and emotional needs (p. 437).

In contrast to Eichorn (1983) and Onyehalu (1983), Protsky and Farrier (1980) and Webb and VanDevere (1984) deter-

mined that the adolescent is not as confused emotionally as previously perceived. They found that upper elementary children had more conflicting emotions and self doubt than the adolescents (Protinsky and Farrier, 1980, pp. 890-891; Webb and VanDevere, 1984, p. 191).

The behavior of early adolescents was discussed in three annotations of recent studies. Everhart (1982) found that "goofing off" was peer oriented and represented the adolescent's need for community growth. His interpretation of the results from his study was that students are not attacking, but expressing needs that are not being met in the highly structured classroom (p. 185).

Veldman and Worsham (1983) studied junior high student behavior and discovered that the outgoing and good students ranked higher in achievement. They also found that academic praise positively affected all kinds of students, but criticism only positively affected the withdrawn and rebellious students (p. 207). Geiger and Turiel (1983) related disruptive behavior to the level of social convention that the student is experiencing. They implied that the students will outgrow the behavior as they proceed to the higher levels of social convention (p. 683).

Self esteem and self concept were discussed in many annotations concerning the early adolescent. Yeger and Mieztis (1980) determined that academic achievement in children with a positive self concept was higher than the achievement of

children with low or negative self esteem (p. 35). However, Calsyn, Pennel, and Harter (1984) found no relationship between self esteem and achievement in the early adolescent (p. 139).

Wilkerson et al., (1982) and Ellis and Davis (1982) represented the studies concerned with negative feelings and depression. The adolescent's moodiness and depressive tendencies are related to feelings of self worth and eventually decrease with age and the presence of supportive adults (Wilkerson et al., 1982, p. 37; Ellis and Davis, 1982, p. 708).

Hayes (1982), Tierno (1983), and Arth, Freeman, and Lawton (1984) interpreted research data and theories of cognitive thought in relation to peer pressure and public criticism. Each of the annotations had results that stressed that opportunities for negative criticism by peers or teachers should be avoided and that even praise should be handled more privately than publicly (Hayes, 1982, p. 163; Tierno, 1983, p. 582; Arth et al., 1984, p. 66).

The middle school program and organizational needs were discussed by Lipsitz (1980), Beane (1983), Dorman, Lipsitz, and Verner (1985), Wiles, Bondi, and Stodghill (1982), and Thomason and Williams (1982). Positive attitudes, academic success (Lipsitz, 1980, pp. 14-15), self-oriented programs (Beane, 1983, p. 68), positive reinforcement (Wiles et al., 1982, pp. 52-53), a special philosophy, and staff development (Thomason and Williams, 1982, p. 56) are some of the important aspects of

successful middle schools.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of humor in the classroom positively affects creativity. Humor, when used at the appropriate levels and in purposeful situations, will enhance the classroom atmosphere and provide emotional release and enjoyment at the middle school level. However, teacher oriented humor must not be hostile, aggressive, humiliating, or inconsistent with the developmental stage of the students involved.

Incorporating humor on tests to reduce anxiety and improve performance is an idea that has not been substantiated by research. The effects of this type of humor have only been proven regarding incidental learning and subject matter retention. Because of the unsure nature of the findings in all testing situations, the teacher must use careful judgement and discretion when using humor on tests.

Praise from the teacher at the middle school level used sparingly and privately can positively affect the performance, motivation, and self concept of the students. The positive verbal feedback should be related to the ability, achievement at the appropriate level or better, the physical appearance, and sometimes the effort of the student concerned. Sincerity

must accompany the response for it to be effective with middle level students.

Praise may have negative effects on performance when it is used to reward effort only or to set an example for the rest of the class. Excessive amounts of praise for desirable behavior, especially in public, may reduce peer relationships and social interaction for the middle school student.

Criticism of work, responses, and effort can have a positive effect on student performance and achievement at the middle school level. However, criticism should not be used with barely motivated or low achieving students that have consistently experienced failure. The middle school student with those feelings will experience rejection and feelings of apathy toward schoolwork if constant criticism is the only feedback he/she receives.

For effective and positive results, criticism must be performance related, impersonal, without sarcasm, and unaggressive. Behavior management in the middle school classroom can be improved by criticism when alternative forms of behavior and peer oriented reasonings are presented without hostility.

From the research on criticism combined with the early adolescent literature, one major conclusion can be drawn. The teacher must be cautious when using criticism publicly in the classroom setting. Peer relationships are drastically important to the social and emotional growth of the early adolescent. If the teacher jeopardizes the student's status with

his/her peers or humiliates the student, severe or irreconcilable negative attitudes may appear.

The early adolescent literature represents many theories and contradictory results. The middle school student experiences drastic physical, emotional, and social changes but does not appear to be as terrorized by these changes as theorists previously thought. The levels of cognitive development and social convention change and a shift from parent to peer importance occurs.

Because of the importance of peers to the middle school student, self concept is often fragile and insecurity abounds. Contradictions are present when self concept and achievement are compared. The nature of the early adolescent's self esteem may determine his/her attitude toward daily performance and behavior, but may not affect the overall achievement whatsoever. Lowered levels of self esteem tend to determine or affect a student's mood or attitude, but have no proven effect on improving or lessening achievement on a long term basis.

The middle school educator must be conscious of the daily changes in the moods, peer interactions, self concept, and physical appearance of the students. Humor may add enjoyment, praise can be an effective reward when used carefully, and justified criticism may improve the performance and behavior of some individuals. The effective middle school teacher will blend the use of humor, praise, and criticism in the classroom after considerable and careful planning, effort, and thought.

Awareness of the facts from educational research will expand the teacher's knowledge of the middle school student's needs, and help him/her design the appropriate approach to meet those needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Further research on the subject of humor specifically designed for the middle school classroom be conducted to determine teacher effectiveness when humor is used.
2. Long range studies that will validate the use of criticism in the middle school classroom should be developed to offer research based data to the educator.
3. The middle school educator and administrative personnel investigate the Middle Grades Assessment Program to further the needs of the middle school student.
4. Educational researchers investigate the middle school and its unique properties for success or failure and the long term effects since the development and change from junior high school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND TYPES OF HUMOR

Stage*	Parallel Cognitive Stage §	Dominant Concern	Type of Humor
Presocial/ Symbiotic	Sensorimotor intelligence	Differentiating self from nonself	Tickling, body contact
Impulsive	Preoperational thought	Bodily functions, motor control, impulses, language competence	Physical-body functions, clowning, slapstick humor, nonsense expres- sions, chanting
Self-protective	Concrete operational period	Establishing and defend- ing ego boundary: gain- ing advantage and con- trol; avoiding trouble	Add: Practical jokes, insults, hostile humor
Conformist		Social acceptance, belong- ing to social group; pleasing others	Add: Conventional jokes, riddles, word plays, moron jokes, racial- ethnic humor
Conscientious	Formal operational period	Self-defined or self-eval- uated beliefs and values; concern for communication and impact on others	Add: Original, good natured humor, tongue- in cheek humor, social satire

*Adapted from Loevinger

§From Piaget

Taken from Tamashiro (1979) p. 70

APPENDIX BLEARNER TRAITS*

Transescents:

- 1) vary widely in the rate at which they are maturing physically, and in the age at which they mature.
- 2) are emotionally insecure.
- 3) reflect a range of intellectual stages.
- 4) desire and need responsibility.
- 5) cling to childhood, yet feel a conflicting yearning for adolescent sophistication.
- 6) are group-minded.
- 7) become intensely loyal-to friends, classmates, school; yet loyalties are brief and shift frequently.
- 8) have intense but short-lived interests.
- 9) possess an insatiable curiosity and thirst for knowledge.
- 10) present a variety of achievement levels to the teacher.

* Eichorn, 1983, p. 46

APPENDIX C

Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents How Schools Can Respond*

1. **Diversity.** Schools can match the varied abilities and interests of students with an equally diverse educational environment through a variety of teaching styles, methods, and materials; a curriculum with a balance among core and high-interest exploratory courses; and flexible scheduling that mixes short and long periods based on the nature of the task and the maturity level of the students.

2. **Self-exploration and self-definition.** Schools can help students to integrate their developing capabilities, interests, and relationships into a sense of who they are by focusing units in courses in these areas. For example, a language arts project might include keeping a diary and writing weekly summaries. A social studies unit could focus on adolescence in various countries and eras. Students should be encouraged to pursue answers to their own questions as well as the teachers's. The guidance program could focus on self-exploration and self-definition in areas like career guidance, family relations, and sexuality.

3. **Meaningful participation in their schools and communities.** Student-initiated study and activities, student councils and committees, and school improvement projects such as designing and constructing recreation areas or learning resources are only a few ways schools can engage students in these areas. Schools can also offer opportunities for students to extend their new knowledge and competencies by contributing to their communities through service projects.

4. **Positive social interaction with peers and adults.** Because of their changing relationships with adults, especially parents, and the increasing importance of peers, positive social interaction with these groups is extremely important to young adolescents. Schools can encourage peer interaction by offering small-group learning activities and by providing space for small groups of students to informally congregate. Positive social interactions between adults and students are facilitated by adviser-advisee relationships, staff participation in activities, and informal contact outside the classroom.

5. **Physical activity.** Responsive schools provide structured outlets for the physical energy of young adolescents, rather than ignoring or trying to suppress it. Noncompetitive physical education is an integral part of the curriculum and physical activity can be encouraged during breaks and lunchtime. Teachers can also provide opportunities for students to move around in the classroom.

6. **Competence and achievement.** Schools can meet these two needs by emphasizing academics, high-quality instruction, positive expectations of all students, generous (but honest) rewards and praise, and opportunities for increased independence and responsibility. A variety of teaching methods and a balanced curriculum of basic subjects, high-interest exploratory courses, and extracurricular activities help provide a diversity of rewards so that each student can be successful at something.

7. **Structure and clear limits.** Schools that are responsive to the young adolescent's need for structure have clearly stated rules and expectations that are generally accepted and understood by students and staff members. One way of assuring acceptance is to involve students in the establishment of rules and the consequences for failing to observe them. Young adolescents need the security provided by clear limits in order to learn and grow during a time of rapid and pervasive change. However, schools should avoid rigid structure and excessive limits because they invite dependency, hostility, withdrawal, and rebellion.

*Identified by the Center for Early Adolescence (Dorman, 1981; Lipsitz, 1984).